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27 August 1957

MEMORANDUM FOR: Assistant Director, Research and Reports
THROUGH: Chief, Geographic Research
SUBJECT: Evaluation of CIA/RR-G-18, Novaya Zemlya

1. This report provides a geographical appraisal of Novaya Zemlya, including the strategic position and current activities of this westernmost group of islands on the Soviet Arctic perimeter. It should be of interest to those in the intelligence community concerned with current developments in and the strategic potential of the Soviet Arctic, which extends nearly half way around the world and lies across the Arctic Basin from Greenland, Canada, and Alaska.

2. This report is the first of a series of geographic analyses which will attempt to cover systematically all the island groups of the Soviet Arctic.

3. Since the role of the islands is strongly influenced by their means of communication with the mainland, air and naval activities and their support facilities are heavily emphasized. The economic activities of the Russian and indigenous populations are also discussed.

4. Sources of information include intelligence reports and published Russian and English books and periodicals which though not abundant, provided ample detail.

5. The maps accompanying this study are now probably the best English language maps of Novaya Zemlya.

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DOCUMENT NO. 2

NO CHANGE IN CLASS. ☐☐ DECLASSIFIED

CLASS. CHANGED TO: TS S (C)

NEXT REVIEW DATE: 1989

AUTH: HR 70-2

DATE: 28 NOV 79 REVIEWER: 005514

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